Objective

The cultural heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean is predominantly made from stone, and throughout antiquity thousands of smaller and larger quarries were opened. The archaeological record in the quarries comprises rare evidence of stone extraction sites, roads, harbours, settlements, ceramics and inscriptions, which collectively constitute an "ancient quarry landscape". Such landscapes are of crucial importance, not only to our understanding of the lives of the non-elite, but of the political and ideological ambitions of an elite that drove resource exploitation to such heights. Yet, as heritage sites of such enormous historical importance these have largely gone unrecognised, mainly due to poor documentation, which has consequently led to their current indiscriminate destruction from actions such as modern development and quarrying. The QuarryScapes project will enhance cultural heritage management of ancient quarry landscapes through the development of methodology and conservation models that can be effectively implemented in a range cultural contexts. QuarryScapes will develop scientific and practical
Methodologies for documentation, characterisation and conservation of ancient quarry landscapes, raise awareness of the significance and vulnerability of such sites and contribute to legal protection measures and sustainable management of ancient quarry landscapes. Through case studies in Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, the project will address development of theoretical and practical methods pertaining to the major steps in the process of conservation: from recognition, investigation and assessment of significance, to understanding the risks, developing sound conservation and monitoring concepts, and suggesting mechanisms for sustainable management. QuarryScapes will also organise open workshops and disseminate project results through the development of practical guidelines for conservation of ancient quarry landscapes.

Programme(s)
Topic(s)

Call for proposal

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Funding Scheme

STREP - Specific Targeted Research Project

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Eighty percent of the ancient quarry sites are in the Nile valley; some of them have disappeared under the waters of Lake Nasser and some others were lost due to modern mining activity. Some of the sites are well identified and the chemical composition of their stones is also well known, allowing the geographical origin of most of the monuments to be traced using petrographic techniques, including neutron activation analysis. In June 2006, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) of Egypt established a new department for conservation of ancient quarries and mines in Egypt. QuarryScapes: Conservation of ancient stone quarry landscapes in eastern Mediterranean. "El Gebel el Ahmar, Egypt". SatelliteViews.net. QuarryScapes was the first project of its kind to address the importance of ancient quarry landscapes and raise awareness of the urgent needs for protecting such sites. QuarryScapes developed scientific and practical methodologies for documentation, characterization and conservation of ancient quarry landscapes, raised the awareness of their significance and vulnerability and contributed to legal protection measures and sustainable management. Through case studies in Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, the project addressed the development of theoretical and practical methods pertaining to the major stone quarry landscapes: ancient stone quarry landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean, Geological Survey of Norway Special Publication, 12, pp. 7–50.